

IS YOUR NAME IN THE BOOK OF LIFE?

INTRODUCTION:

1. If you could have a single honor bestowed on you, what would you desire?
 - A. Wealth? You could use this wealth to do worthwhile things—to help people and be remembered for good works.
 - B. Knowledge? You could solve problems that have afflicted the human race throughout history, such as alleviating misery, hunger, disease. You could be like Jonas Salk who created the polio vaccine.
 - C. Wisdom? This was what Solomon asked God for, and righteously so. And, you could use this to possibly bring peace to a world in chaos.
 - D. Miraculous power? You could help others in ways that modern medicine, technology, etc., can only dream of.
2. Yet, is there an honor even greater than all these that you could wish for?
 - A. In asking this, I acknowledge the great amount of good that could be done through the gifts mentioned above. And, servants of God have used these very gifts to do great good.
 - B. But, there is an honor even greater than all of these which you *can* have (Luke 10)!
 - i. Jesus sent out 70 disciples on a limited commission to do great things among the Jews (Luke 10:1-12). Note the powerful gifts they were given!
 - ii. Yet, when they returned extremely excited about the power they had been given to do good, Jesus told of a far greater gift for which they should rejoice (Luke 10:17-20).
 - iii. For, as Jesus pointed out, the greatest gift we can ever receive is the realization that our names are written in heaven—that God knows us and has entered our names in His Book of Life!
 - C. For, as we shall see, God’s Book of Life is real and its importance to us, as far as whether our names are written in it, cannot be overestimated.
3. And, that is what I want to talk about today—about whether you have your name written in the book of life, and what it is, and what means to have your name there, whose names will be written there, etc.

DISCUSSION:

I. What is the Book of Life?

- A. Registering the people of God in a book was an ancient practice of God’s people.
 1. There are O.T. references to the Jewish practice of recording its citizens in a book.
 - a. One’s listing within this book indicated being a part of God’s covenant nation (Ezra 2:59, 61-62 – “And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer; but they could not identify their father’s house or their genealogy, whether they *were* of Israel...⁶¹ and of the sons of the priests: the sons of Habaiah, the sons of Koz, and the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. ⁶²These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore they *were excluded* from the priesthood as defiled.”).
 - b. And, being in this book was a privilege offered to the faithful of God’s people (Ezek. 13:9 – “My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord God.”).
 2. In addition to this earthly registry, the idea of a *divine registry* of the names of those who belong to God is also a well-established biblical truth.
 - a. A divine registry is mentioned as far back as the days of Moses (Ex. 23:31-33 – “Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! ³²“Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” ³³And the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”).
 - b. Daniel spoke of God’s eternal deliverance for those whose names were in this book (Dan. 12:1-2 – “At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there

was a nation, *Even* to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.”).

- B. And, the reality of a divine register of the faithful of God continues for us today.
1. Paul spoke of how fellow laborers in the gospel had their names recorded in God’s Book of Life (Phil. 4:3 – “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.”).
 - a. It is interesting to note that the names of these people are not listed and, therefore, unknown to us. But, God knows who they are!
 - b. And, down through the centuries there have been people like this, who although unknown to us were faithful to God and had their names written there as well!
 2. And, in connection with this book and others that God possesses, we will be judged concerning our eternal destiny (Rev. 20:11-12 – “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.”).

II. When is one’s name written in God’s Book of Life?

- A. There are those who teach the Calvinistic doctrine that God wrote the *individual* names of all who will be saved “before the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8 – “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”).
1. The passage only speaks of how these have not had their names in this book **from**, or **since**, the time of creation. Calvinists, however, insist this list was made **before** creation!
 2. So, is it proper exegesis to assume that because these people’s names have not been written in this book *since* the foundation of the earth, that this implies that:
 - a. They were individually predestined to be lost before time began?
 - i. Or, does it not make more sense to say that it emphasizes that because of their wickedness their names have never been written into this book?
 - ii. In other words, these people have always been wicked and never been saved.
 - b. The saved are written in this book *before* the foundation of the earth?
 3. Biblical “predestination” relates to a selection of a **class** of people to be saved, those who by faith enter into Christ, not that of an individual.
 - a. For, God’s purpose is to write in the Book of Life the names of those who choose by faith and obedience to come into Christ.
 - b. Eph. 1:4 – “just as He **chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that **we** should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”
 - c. Eph. 1:11-12 – “In Him also **we** have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that **we** who **first trusted in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory.”
- B. When one is obedient to gospel, their name is written in the Book of Life.
1. When one is outside of Christ, one is lost and their name is not yet in the Book of Life (Eph. 2:1, 3 – “And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins...³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath, just as the others.**”).
 - a. If they were “children of wrath, just as the others,” they were not yet in the Book of Life.
 - b. For, if Calvinism is true, they would have never been children of wrath, seeing they were predestined before the foundation of the world to be saved, never to be lost.
 2. So, it is only when one obeys the gospel in faith that one enters into Christ, salvation, and the Book of Life.

- a. Through faith we are baptized into Christ, into His body.
 - i. Gal. 3:26-27 – “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.”
 - ii. Rom. 6:3 – “Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ** Jesus were baptized into His death?”
- b. So, until one obeys the doctrine of Christ in baptism, one is still *in the world*, “a servant of sin” and of Satan.
 - i. Rom. 6:17-18 – “But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you **obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸And **having been set free from sin**, you became slaves of righteousness.”)
 - ii. 1 Pet. 1:22 – “Since you have **purified your souls in obeying the truth** through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart”
- c. For, it is in baptism that one’s sins are washed away (Acts 22:16 – “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”).

III. Can we know if our names are written in God’s Book of Life? YES!

- A. This knowledge is gained and assured by self-examination (2 Cor. 13:5 – “Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.”).
 - 1. Obviously, if we are “in the faith” and Christ is in us, we are saved.
 - 2. And, when one is saved, he/she has their name written in God’s Book of Life.
- B. One can know if his/her name has been written in this Book by comparing his/her heart and actions to the standard of God’s word.
 - 1. For, Jesus said true love for God in the heart is expressed in obedience (John 14:15 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”).
 - 2. And, John writes that we know we are in Christ and God’s love is perfected in us by keeping His commandments (1 Jn. 2:3-5 – “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”).
 - 3. Those who claim a connection to God but walk in the darkness of sin and rebellion are liars (1 Jn. 1:6 – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”).
 - 4. So, we have a perfect standard by which we can judge whether we are in this book.

IV. Can names can be “blotted out” of the Book of Life?

- A. As was true concerning one’s enrollment in the register of Israel, from its earliest mention there has been a **condition of faithfulness** connected to remaining in God’s Book of Life.
 - 1. God said that whosoever sins against Him will be blotted out of His book (Ex. 32:33 – “And the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”).
 - 2. If Calvinism is true, this statement is false and misleading!
- B. Those who are saved that defile their spiritual garments with sin and rebellion will be blotted out of God’s Book of Life (Rev. 3:4-5 – “You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”).
- C. One who *tampers* with God’s word will have their name removed from the Book of Life (Rev. 22:19 – “and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” – NKJV).
 - 1. One can twist the word of God to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16 – “as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the

Scriptures.”).

2. Now, other modern translations have “tree of life” here.
3. Yet, the point is the same, seeing that to have no part in the tree of life is just as eternally condemning as to have one’s name taken out of the Book of Life!

V. How important is having your name in this book?

- A. Only those whose names are written in this book will be able to enter the city of God (Rev. 21:27 – “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.”).
 1. There is some question as to whether this city refers to heaven or to the pure and holy church into which all nations will flow.
 - a. Yet, the end result is the same.
 - b. For, the church is the body that will be saved in heaven.
 2. The church is what Christ purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28 – “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”).
 3. So, the church is made up of those who have been saved in Christ, those whose name has been written in the Book of Life. So, without one’s name being written in that book, that person cannot be in the church or saved in heaven.
- B. If your name is found in this book, your name will be confessed before the Father (Rev. 3:5 – “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”).
- C. Those whose names are not found there will face eternal condemnation in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15 – “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”).

CONCLUSION:

1. Has your name been written in the Lamb’s book of life?
2. For, there is no greater honor to have bestowed upon your life than to know that your name has been written in heaven in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
3. That will only happen, however, if you choose to put your faith in Christ and come to him on his terms, which necessitates faith and acceptance of him as your Lord, repenting of your sins, confessing Him, and being baptized into Christ so as to be raised to newness of life and live faithfully until death!